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Video and emotionality in the social network sites during elections: The general election campaign of April 2019 in Spain

ABSTRACT

This is a study on videos generated or shared on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram by the main political parties' candidates during the general election campaign for the government of Spain in April 2019. Using a quantitative analysis and a statistical approach, the means of audiovisual persuasion used by the candidates are analysed, addressing their emotional nature. It is shown that the traditional political parties in their campaigns use audiovisual formats that are less emotional than those of the new emerging parties. Secondly, a clear difference can be seen among the leaders in their use of audiovisual formats to convey their messages.

THE USE OF VIDEOS AND THE SOCIAL NETWORK SITES IN CURRENT POLITICAL COMMUNICATION

We are living in an era of convergence and collision between old and new media (Chadwick 2013). It is an era of crisis and evolution in which all bodies of knowledge are adapting their resources and circumstances to the recently created and still largely unknown rules of the game. Addressing one of the fundamental sections in Habermas' public sphere (1991) – the one that includes democracy and its elections – scholars talk of an inevitable adaptation to internet 2.0, in which the receiver becomes an active user (Shirky 2008). This, as well as many other considerations, has made it possible for Politics 2.0 to emerge, which has brought together political information and the social media platforms (Bode and Vagra 2017), and is fostering a growing trend in political activism and communication from which it would appear there is no turning back.

The communication ecosystem dominated by the success of the social network sites (SNS) or social media platforms – we will use both terms to speak about the same devices – has led to universally known and applicable phenomena such as the one described by Pariser as 'filter bubbles' (2011), showing us the content that reinforces our points of view, coupled with what have been described as 'echo chambers', where the internet acts as a space in which one's political orientation is reinforced among equals (Sunstein 2018). However, for some authors, the random flow and browsing around the internet may increase the heterogeneity of political discussion networks and diminish the 'negative effect' (Dubois and Blank 2018).

On the other hand, there is widespread optimism that the social media may stimulate political participation among young people (Storsul 2014). The participatory culture proposed by Jenkins (2006), driven by these sociable networks, may encourage younger people to get involved with political activity since it is more informal, anti-authoritarian and guided by peers. Nevertheless, other authors referring to recent events consider that we are living in a 'media ecology' (Scolari 2015) that is toxic as of its very conception, with a design based on business and a lack of transparency and accountability (Crilley and Gillespie 2019) and which has reached high levels of corruption as seen in the emblematic case of the political consultancy firm Cambridge Analytica, whose example illustrates many of the risks related to the evolution of the inappropriate use of big data entails (Suárez-Gonzalo 2018). Specifically, two elections in which 'microtargeting' and this 'data mining' consultancy firm intervened in some way and used 50 million Facebook users' information illegally were the 2016 US presidential elections that led to Donald Trump's victory (Wolff 2018) and the same year's Brexit referendum that led to political and economic upheaval in the United Kingdom and the European Union and are still dominating news headlines. Both elections saw unexpected results that disconcerted analysts and experts. Indeed, their consequences created an epistemic crisis in modern democratic societies (Benkler et al. 2018).

Iosifidis and Wheeler (2018) also believe that after these votes, there has been an observable concern about the role of SNS as a polarizing, destabilizing factor for democratic systems. Without a doubt, the victories of Brexit and Trump have driven 'techno-pessimism' to record heights (Crilley and Gillespie 2019). Furthermore, since those votes, there has been a worldwide surge in populist, extreme right-wing parties (although there are those who began their rise in the elections to the European parliament), such as in Brazil, where

Jair Bolsonaro has become the president of the country, and in Greece with the party Golden Dawn. Even in countries whose modern historical events seem to have inoculated them against fascism, such political propositions have obtained success as in Italy with Matteo Salvini's Liga Norte and even in Germany itself with Alternative for Germany. We are therefore dealing with a global phenomenon, or rather a *glocal* one (Robertson 1992).

In any case, the use of SNS for marketing and distributing political content is not a phenomenon that began with the campaigns by Trump or Bolsonaro, but has been around for longer (Enli 2017; Bode 2016; Jungherr 2016), as has even the intensive use of video as a political tool. In Obama's campaign in 2008, almost 2000 videos were produced and disseminated on YouTube, reaching over 18 million hits (Lutz 2017). Without the internet, it is probable that there would not have been a President Obama, since the use of these resources at the service of online politics was a decisive factor in the presidential primaries as well as in his subsequent victory at the ballot box for the presidency. It should also be added, however, that without the internet, there probably would not have been a President Trump (Krämer 2017), either, since his victory used an internet-based communication strategy designed by his controversial campaign chief Steve Bannon, resorting to fake news to attack Hillary Clinton, his democratic rival, with help from shady resources related to the Russian influence of President Vladimir Putin (Kellner 2017). It seems clear, judging by what we are learning, that new technologies manipulated by foreigners played a decisive role in Trump's victory in 2016 and are responsible for the post-truth times we are now experiencing, where disinformation and propaganda are thriving (Allcott and Gentzkow 2017; Ott 2017).

The crisis for television has been discussed at great length for at least three decades (Debrett 2014; Dahlgren et al. 2000; Steemers 1998), without the continued perception of weakness having led to its elimination at all. The social media have created novel ways of producing, disseminating and consuming visual products (Veneti et al. 2019), and without a doubt, traditional television is becoming obsolete in its distribution: random access (as opposed to linear access) to television content has occurred not only with platforms like YouTube but also with the arrival of on-demand cable television, the generalization of streaming services and even *a la carte* online versions of traditional television platforms (Lobato 2019). The fact is that videos now account for 58 per cent of internet traffic (Netflix alone takes up 15 per cent) (Cantor 2018), and YouTube has become the second most popular website in the world after Google. Among other considerations, this is leading to the most popular video repository becoming even more mainstream. What seems evident is that the recipes of traditional media will not be the most appropriate to successfully face this era of prominence of online video (Nielsen and Sambrook 2016).

This social phenomenon, which, as happens in other SNS, promotes the figure of the 'produser' as an active receiver capable of launching their message (or at least attempting to do so), has produced its own easily recognizable style in the content generated (Guerrero-Pico et al. 2019). The so-called 'YouTubers' (privileged users who, in a few cases, attain audiences of millions with a resulting income of millions, too) continue to cultivate a certain amateur aesthetic for their young audience. YouTubers have recognizable characteristics such as their confessional style, the celebration of what they call 'bedroom culture', the use of webcam technology and the aesthetics of video blogs or *vlogs* (Burgess and Green 2018).

YouTube's popularity is without a doubt the result of the success of the online video phenomenon, but the phenomenon goes far beyond the YouTube platform or similar ones like Vimeo, contaminating the content of other networks not specifically limited to the use of the resource of online video. On both Facebook and Twitter, for example, the use of video is ever more popular, as well as in the other visual network *par excellence*, Instagram, where the moving image is increasingly important. As for the topics of these online videos, it is true that they focus on entertainment and lifestyle, but in election times, they have demonstrated an ability to act as a viable channel for political communication (LaChrystal 2014).

The broader aim of posting images is to generate, maintain, sharpen and strengthen favourable perceptions among the general public in order to affect their personal political attitudes and, by extension, strategic decision-making (Strachan and Kendall 2004). In addition, Bennett (2016) stresses that political images are a more emotional and intellectually accessible resource for specific sectors of the public, but they also help give greater credibility to the messages and are very decisive in the processes for forming a vote. According to several studies, before voting, people usually take into account the candidates' personal qualities such as honesty, intelligence, friendliness, sincerity, trustworthiness and leadership, which can be conveyed visually (Lobinger and Brantner 2015). Drew Westen thinks that voters make themselves four questions: 'How do I feel about the candidate's party and its principles?'; 'How does this candidate make me feel?'; 'How do I feel about this candidate's personal characteristics, particularly his or her integrity, leadership, and compassion?'; and 'How do I feel about this candidate's stand on issues that matter to me?' Candidates who focus their campaigns towards the top of this list and work their way down generally win (Westen 2007). For all of these reasons, it would seem to be worthwhile to look into the growing importance that emotion and the figure of a leader are acquiring in politics.

EMOTIONALITY AND PERSONALIZATION IN POLITICAL DISCOURSE

We cannot untangle the processes of communication from the 'emotional public sphere' (Baum 2012). Various studies have examined the impact of emotion on political behaviour and attitudes (Wahl-Jorgensen 2019; Redlawsk et al. 2007; Marcus 2003). As explained by George Lakoff (2002), people vote or mobilize politically due to moral values and conceptual frameworks, which are mostly related to their affections and identities, even if they go or act against their own interests. And one decisive aspect of political affectivity is ideological belonging (Arias Maldonado 2016). This is why it is believed that it is important in society today to articulate politics 'of emotions' that are able to recognize the decisive role of feelings in commitment and political action, as well as emphasizing the reception more than the broadcasting of the political message. Those responsible for political campaigns have to create the audiovisual content and communicate with their voters on an emotional level (Brader 2005).

The shift from the public space to the personal terrain blurs the separation that had historically been forged between the public and private spheres (Habermas 1991) and brings us closer to the 'emotional' public sphere (Richards 2010) in which it is no longer necessary to exclude feelings and private matters in order to carry out political activity with guarantees. This process of erosion of intimacy and, in general, of political subjects' zones of privacy has been termed by some researchers as the 'privatisation' of politics

(Holtz-Bacha 2004). As a result of this, matters traditionally associated with the family sphere or sentimental relationships are now displayed publicly and openly. This leads to the association between political heads and celebrities becoming ever more common, to the point where they are followed and scrutinized in similar terms. Inevitably, this 'privatisation' of power is connected to the 'personalisation' of politics (Bennett 2012), i.e. the adulation of the political leader or candidate as opposed to ideas and parties (Maarek 2011), and to a growing 'spectacularisation' of political information (Delli Caprini and Williams 2011), although it goes much further. Among other consequences, in some way it helps the 'sensorial' marketing that is becoming so popular in commercial competition to break into the political sphere, enabling the intangible and emotional to acquire an importance they did not have before.

This change has been both welcomed and frowned upon. On the one hand, the introduction of emotional elements in political communication is seen in a very positive light because, among other advantages, it enables topics to be included that until now remained outside news spaces, creating the effect of broadening the agenda. In this sense, the emotional point of view could make the traditionally 'drier' political content more accessible for wider audiences who have historically been less interested in politics (Thussu 2007; Baum and Jamison 2006). Some authors maintain that this may help boost the connection between citizens and the democratic process, and broaden public debate (Hartley 1999), which could help reduce political disaffection among a significant section of citizens at a time of falling civic commitment, growing distances between the governing and the governed, crisis in democratic representation and, in summary, a decline in public concerns.

According to some opinions (Lakoff 2002), the only way for politics to again show itself to be a powerful strategy for collective engagement is for it to be conceived according to feelings and assessed in emotional terms. They affirm that politics must be the emotion of 'necessary and urgent hope', which can only happen when citizens 'feel' they can intervene and can be active participants in matters that concern them directly. In this vein, the creation of 'emotional ecosystems' in politics could foster opportunities for greater involvement from citizens and for deeper personal 'empowerment' that leaves a greater mark and is more far-reaching than a simple adherence or identification with an ideology. Showing themselves through the SNS can help politicians connect with citizens on a more emotional, intimate level, which can make a politician 'one of us' (Metz et al. 2019: 12). The creation of a sense of 'intimacy' (Marwick and Boyd 2011) and of 'authenticity' (Aira 2020) between the sender, in this case the politician, and the viewer constitutes an indispensable factor when displaying a credible emotional connection between both agents.

However, other voices maintain that the relevance of emotion and affection when communicating politics, and therefore the incidence of more intimate and personal aspects, simplifies and trivializes it (Langer 1998). An in-depth analysis of matters takes a back seat, with a tendency to increase the presence of anecdotes and superficiality, which leads to an impoverishment of the debate on matters of public interest (Blumler 1999). One of the consequences of this approach, according to this point of view, is that informed politics loses significance to a 'lighter' content packed with personalized focuses, partial information and theatrical or comical narrations of political life. The danger of insisting on the 'story' over strict analyses is that marketing techniques end up replacing the political 'project'; thanks to their capacity for

propagation, multiplication and transmission. In such cases, politics may be reduced to the emotional power of the image, propaganda could be bolstered or mob oratory could multiply.

In recent years, an effective communication management of the flow of emotions has been essential to the success of political actions on different levels and scales. Borah (2016) suggests that emotionality played a significant role in persuading people to take part in the 2008 and 2012 presidential election campaigns in the United States. However, the sudden appearance and rise of 5 Stelle in Italy and the surge in populist, xenophobic discourses throughout Europe, with Marine Le Pen's Front Nationale at the forefront, are paradigmatic examples of the success of emotional discourse in politics. Of course, these groups were to be joined by the aforementioned victories of Brexit in the United Kingdom, Trump in the United States and Bolsonaro in Brazil, which have been widely studied, and are explained in part by their ability to promote arguments that have a lot more to do with passions than strictly rational thoughts. In many cases, they are organizations or leaders who present themselves as more agile and 'fresh' than the other parties and candidates and who understand political communication in a different way.

In this vein, different studies indicate that a suitable use of SNS by political parties (and especially by the candidates) in which they can show their more intimate, personal side leads to much more engagement from citizens, who feel more committed to that politician and their candidacy (Thorson et al. 2019). This is a strategy that can give such politicians better electoral results, as happened with Facebook for some politicians in Taiwan (Lin 2017). It is also clearly seen in the use that some politicians, such as the Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, are making of Instagram from a very personal and emotional point of view, almost as if they were celebrities (Lalancette and Raynauld 2017). The conversion into celebrities of politics would be one of the most tangible consequences of these processes (Street 2012). The research we are putting forward comes within the context of a trend in using these communication strategies that is still growing.

HYPOTHESIS AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Taking these prior influential factors into account, the intention was to analyse the activity of the candidates to be the prime minister of Spain during the election campaign of April 2019, restricting the scope to the most popular SNS: Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. The candidates chosen for this study were Pedro Sánchez, of the PSOE (Partido Socialista Obrero Español, centre-left and incumbent president); Pablo Casado, of the PP (Partido Popular, centre-right); Albert Rivera of Ciudadanos (liberals); Pablo Iglesias of Unidas Podemos (far-left); and Santiago Abascal of Vox (far-right). They were the political parties that obtained the highest parliamentary representation in the Spanish Congress in those elections, and they were the only formations that appeared in all the constituencies. For the first time since democracy was reinstated in Spain in 1978, there were five parties with possibilities of winning the elections. In fact, the Spanish political panorama has changed a great deal in recent years. Historically, the PSOE and PP have always been able to govern alone with overall or large simple majorities. However, the sudden appearance of Podemos in the European elections in 2014 and Ciudadanos shortly after, taking advantage of the erosion of traditional politics largely due to the economic crisis, brought with it a

new way of doing politics. These 'emerging' players, unlike the 'traditional' ones (PSOE and PP), typically have far fewer qualms about using new technologies and creating more emotional political discourses (Casero-Ripollés et al. 2016). The appearance of Vox has also been a shock in recent Spanish politics, especially in the communication landscape (Sampietro and Sánchez-Castillo 2020).

This way of understanding the political practice has compelled the traditional parties and their candidates in some way to change their style and gradually introduce this trend, which, as we have mentioned above, has correlations around the world. This scenario has become even more complex with the far-right party Vox becoming established in the general elections in November 2019, taking advantage of the political success of xenophobic, populist far-right movements in Europe and the Americas.

The decision to analyse the posts by the parties and candidates on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram was taken because these were the three social media platforms with the most users in Spain at the time of this study. Furthermore, each of these social media has its own behavioural patterns and forms of communication. This is also seen in terms of political communication, where each social media platform acquires a different use (Stier et al. 2018). In any case, the truth is that the research carried out in the case of Spain indicates that the main Spanish leaders and their teams have not yet taken up a 2.0 commitment. In other words, they do not consider the SNS to be a space for participation but merely a means of disseminating information in the classic emitter–receiver sense, which they do indeed consider unavoidable (López-García 2016). This is especially surprising if we take into account that posting videos on social media platforms is much cheaper than doing so via traditional media.

As an example, and according to the most recent studies, political parties and their leaders are still underusing Facebook to disseminate audiovisual content, tending to use Twitter more (Chaves-Montero et al. 2017). The same thing happens with YouTube. The studies carried out indicate that over 70 per cent of the videos most seen on the platform showing candidates for the prime minister of Spain in the 2016 elections were made and uploaded by anonymous citizens, not by themselves or the party (Berrocal-Gonzalo et al. 2017). The presence of video on Instagram is not much more significant, either. According to Quevedo-Redondo and Portalés-Oliva (2017), in the aforementioned study, only 2.7 per cent of the profile posts on Instagram by Spanish prime ministerial candidates in the 2015 general elections were videos, even though it has been shown that using them multiplies citizens' engagement six-fold. What seems clear is that Instagram 'territory' is suited to appealing to emotions, hybridizing spaces and personalizing politics in Spain, too (López-Rabadan and Doménech-Fabregat 2018). In any case, everything points to this movement still being in an experimental phase in search of a communication style.

Within the general analysis of the posts generated by the different candidates, the focus has been on the content of the video. In this regard, the following research questions and hypothesis have been put forward:

RQ1. Are there quantitative differences in the use (or not) of audiovisual resources in the different candidates' posts in terms of their ideological orientation or emergent/traditional nature?

RQ2. How much presence of the candidates' own image appears in the analysed videos?

H1. The candidates from emerging parties, regardless of their orientation within the left-right spectrum, tend to use the audiovisual resource in the SNS in a more emotional way than the traditional ones.

METHOD

A comparative study of the different SNS was chosen, since focusing on one may give a limited conclusion. This is especially so with Twitter, which may lead the scientific community to take findings that depend on the platform to be universal. Polarization can be much greater in this social medium than in others (García et al. 2015).

In order to reply to the research questions and the hypothesis proposed, 625 videos were analysed in the SNS ($M = 2.11$, SD = 0.578): Facebook ($n = 142$; 22.7%), Twitter ($n = 409$; 65.4%) and Instagram ($n = 74$; 11.8%), during the election campaign of April 2019 to lead the government of Spain, with the candidates ($M = 8.73$, SD = 1.349) Pablo Casado (PP, conservative) ($n = 162$; 25.9%), Pablo Iglesias (Unidos Podemos, left-wing) ($n = 146$; 23.4%), Pedro Sánchez (PSOE, social democrats) ($n = 139$; 22.2%), Santiago Abascal (Vox, extreme right-wing) ($n = 95$; 15.2%) and Albert Rivera (Ciudadanos, liberal) ($n = 83$; 13.3%), during the election period from 12 to 26 April 2019. The SNS considered were Twitter ($n = 409$; 65.4%), Facebook ($n = 142$; 22.7%) and Instagram ($n = 74$; 11.8%), since they were the ones most used by the candidates for their communications during the campaign.

The audiovisual formats were classified in two ways: from a deductive and an inductive perspective. Firstly, based on experience, a list of audiovisual formats was deduced that could then be used to make up the complete sample obtained by simply looking at it on gathering it. Inductive criteria were then used to analyse $N = 313$, 50% of the audiovisual posts, deleting ones that were irrelevant, redundant or with no candidate present, including some that had been overlooked at the beginning. The result gave ten different types of format. In order to establish the weightings for emotionality for each format, an inter-rater reliability test was used, applying a Likert scale: (1) little emotion; (2) some emotion; (3) moderate emotion; (4) a lot of emotion; (5) maximum emotion, levels used in previous research (Adelaar et al. 2003; Gaetan et al. 2016; Guadagno et al. 2013; Powers et al. 2011). The inter-rater reliability test of the codifier process, the formula for Scott's Pi (π), using a sample of $N = 288$; 46.08%, by means of three coders A–B–C, gave values of AB (π 739, 86%), AC (π 708, 78%) and CB (π 698, 73%), so the data in the three vectors were bigger than the 0.60 established in other referential exploratory studies (Neuendorf 2002; Krippendorff 1990).

The level of emotion is not very evenly distributed among the ten formats analysed ($M = 2.91$, SD = 1.174). The formats scored with a 5 on the Likert scale proposed were 'YouTuber-style selfie looking at the camera' ($n = 28$; 4.5%) and 'Ambient and unedited resources' ($n = 99$; 15.8%); with a 4 were 'Rectangular TV broadcast ad without subtitles < 40 seconds' ($n = 4$; 0.6%) and 'Other uncommon audiovisual proposals' ($n = 10$; 1.6%); with a 3 were 'Live broadcast of meetings or events' ($n = 60$; 9.6%) and 'Specific ad for SNS' ($n = 105$; 16.8%); with a 2 were 'Soundbite from a meeting' ($n = 183$; 29.3%) and 'Soundbite from an interview or debate in the media' ($n = 128$; 20.5%) and lastly, the least perception of emotion, scoring 1 were 'Usual news, item or video on television' ($n = 2$; 0.3%) and 'Spontaneous press scrum recorded with an autonomous "ENG camera" – Electronic News Gathering' ($n = 6$; 1%).

The political parties analysed (M = 1.52, SD = 0.500) showed differences between the 'traditional' ones (n = 301; 48.2%) and 'emerging' ones (n = 324; 51.8%). As for the political spectrum, the parties (M = 1.54, SD = 0.498) were classified as 'right' (n = 340; 54.4%) or 'left' (n = 285; 45.6%). Lastly, the division of audiovisual categories was considered (M = 1.39, SD = 0.489) in terms of their emotionality. For classification, the format was taken into account, not the content, considering the different levels of emotionality related to the individual-amateur vs. impersonal-professional nature of the different categories. According to McLuhan (1964), we consider that the 'format' or the 'medium', following his terminology, determines to a certain extent the message that ends up being disseminated. We agree that 'remediation' processes (Bolter and Grusin 1999) have shown some years ago that this theory is not applicable in all cases, because new technologies can be used, for example, to spread 'traditional' messages formally, and vice versa. Anyway, with reference to audiovisual formats, we can argue that a YouTuber-style selfie is more affective and emotional, since it appeals to 'produser' aesthetics (of an individual a priori with the same worth and professional skill as the receiver, taking up the role of the broadcaster for a moment). Specifically, research on the use of selfies by influencers shows that intimacy, the emotional and affective bonds that they develop with their followers, constitutes one of the key pieces of their success (Abidin 2016).

On the other hand, a news item from a traditional medium or a sound-bite taken from a debate implies the audiovisual professionalism in creating it, which brings with it a series of formal aspects that could be interpreted by the receivers as interferences. An unedited cutaway taken with a mobile phone that anyone could use loses the authority aesthetically conferred by a professional video camera mounted on a crane, but on the other hand, it gains in affectivity and emotion. It is clearly the vision of an individual, perceived as more natural and immediate, and sits more naturally within the dissemination channel of a social media platform. A soundbite of a candidate in a meeting (the same as that could be seen on TV news) when received via the SNS can be perceived as transferred material, without the 'authenticity' of other more private proposals, in accordance with the above. Also, we consider the category of other uncommon proposals to be more emotional due to their idiosyncrasy, for example, allowing posts with song lists in Spotify. Overall, therefore, it is considered that the categories 'Specific ad for SNS', 'Ambient and unedited resources', 'YouTuber-style selfie looking at the camera' and 'Other uncommon audiovisual proposals' correspond to a more alternative, personalized format of an emotional nature (n = 246; 38.4%), whereas the other more traditional ones are less so (n = 379; 60.6%). For the statistical analysis to contrast hypotheses and contingency tables, SPPS.v.21 was used.

RESULTS

After completing the statistical model, the first results were obtained. With regard to RQ_1, although both left-wing and right-wing parties predominantly and equally use the two different categories of the soundbite or specific ad for SNS, there is a significant difference in the usage of the different categories proposed ($r(625)$ = −0.38, p < 0.010), especially as we can see in Table 1 that the left-wing parties' candidates use ambient and unedited resources little (0.6%) whereas the right-wing uses them as a habitual resource (15.2%). On the other hand, the selfie-type video resource is used by the left 23 times (3.7%) and by more right-leaning candidates only five times (0.8%).

Table 1: Crosstab. Audiovisual category/political spectrum (by the authors).

	Left	**Right**	**Total**
Soundbite from meeting	100 (16)	83 (13.3)	183 (29.3)
Soundbite from interview or debate in the media	64 (10.2)	64 (10.2)	128 (20.5)
Specific video ad for social networks	46 (7.4)	59 (9.4)	105 (16.8)
Ambient and unedited resources	4 (0.6)	95 (15.2)	99 (15.8)
Live broadcast from meetings or events	39 (6.2)	21 (3.4)	60 (9.6)
YouTuber-style selfie looking at the camera	23 (3.7)	5 (0.8)	28 (4.5)
Other uncommon audiovisual ideas	8 (1.3)	2 (0.3)	10 (1.6)
Spontaneous press scrum recorded with an autonomous camera	0	6 (1)	6 (1)
TV broadcast ad without subtitles, oblong <40 seconds	0	4 (0.6)	4 (0.6)
News item, piece or common video on TV	1 (0.2)	1 (0.2)	2 (0.3)
Total	285 (45.6)	340 (54.4)	625 (100)

X^2 (9, N = 625) 113.445, p = 0.0001.
Eta-square = 0.149 (audiovisual category); 0.426 (political spectrum).
N (%).

Comparing the data from the audiovisual category with the difference between 'traditional' or 'emerging' candidates in Table 2, we can see that the traditional political parties use formats with a medium level of emotion (3 and 4 on the Likert scale). However, it is clear that the emerging parties' candidates have not only a strong emotional presence (Likert scale 5 and 4) but also a noteworthy medium value (Likert scale 3 and 2). It is shown that the traditional political parties use audiovisual formats with proportionally less emotion such as 'Specific ad for SNS' and 'Soundbite from a meeting', whereas the emerging parties use more emotiveness with 'YouTuber-style selfie looking at the camera' and 'Ambient and unedited resources'.

Twitter is the social medium mostly chosen by the candidates overall to disseminate their audiovisual messages. Referring to the different formats used depending on the social network site (r(625) = 0.62, p < 0.001), it can be seen in Table 3 that Twitter is the one preferred to disseminate some formats such as soundbites or ambient and unedited resources (13%), compared to Instagram (1.8%) and Facebook (1.1%), whereas with other formats, this difference is not perceived.

In RQ$_2$, with regard to the presence of the candidate leader using their own image in videos they have shared (r(625) = 0.348, p < 0.000), we find a significant difference between the profiles analysed: Pablo Casado heads the table, appearing in 23% of all such videos compared to 2.9% of the videos in which he does not. Pedro Sánchez and Pablo Iglesias also take up a large but lesser share. Albert Rivera appears some way behind, but even so, the frequency of the posts in which he appears triples those in which he does not. It is surprising to see that the image of Santiago Abascal appears only 6.7% of the times, compared to 8.5% when it does not (see Table 4).

On the other hand, if we look at H$_1$, which posits that the emerging parties use the recourse of emotionality more in the video categories chosen for their posts in the three SNS under study (r(625) = −0.82, p < 0.000), we can see that the traditional parties use formats with a medium emotional level (Likert scale

Table 2: Crosstab. Audiovisual category/part type (by the authors).

	Traditional	Emergent
(5) YouTuber-style selfie looking at the camera	2 (7.1)	26 (92.9)
(5) Ambient and unedited resources	19 (19.2)	80 (80.8)
(4) Rectangular TV broadcast ad without subtitles <40 seconds	1 (25)	3 (75)
(4) Other uncommon audiovisual proposals	0	10 (100)
(3) Live broadcast of meetings or events	39 (65)	21 (35)
(3) Specific ad for social networks	67 (63.8)	38 (36.2)
(2) Soundbite from a meeting	113 (61.7)	70 (38.3)
(2) Soundbite from an interview or debate in the media	55 (43)	73 (57)
(1) Usual news item or video on television	0	2 (100)
(1) Spontaneous press scrum recorded with an autonomous camera	5 (83.3)	1 (16.7)
Total	301 (48.2)	324 (51.8)

Note: Order of categories from most to least emotionality (5–1). Data in rows, N (%).
X^2 (9, N = 625) 99.156, p = 0.000.
Eta = 0.237 (category); 0.398 (type of medium).
N (%).

Table 3: Crosstab. Category/social network (by the authors).

	Instagram	Twitter	Facebook	Total
Soundbite from meeting	12 (1.9)	132 (21.1)	39 (6.2)	183 (29.3)
Soundbite from interview or debate in the media	12 (1.9)	90 (14.4)	26 (4.2)	128 (20.5)
Specific video ad for social networks	28 (4.5)	47 (7.5)	30 (4.8)	105 (16.8)
Ambient and unedited resources	11 (1.8)	81 (13)	7 (1.1)	99 (15.8)
Live broadcast from meetings or events	0	29 (4.6)	31 (5)	60 (9.6)
YouTuber-style selfie looking at the camera	11 (1.8)	10 (1.6)	7 (1.1)	28 (4.5)
Other uncommon audiovisual ideas	0	9 (1.4)	1 (0.2)	10 (1.6)
Spontaneous press scrum recorded with an autonomous camera	0	6 (1)	0	6 (1)
TV broadcast ad without subtitles, oblong <40 seconds	0	3 (0.5)	1 (0.2)	4 (0.6)
News item, piece or common video on TV	0	2 (0.3)	0	2 (0.3)
Total	74 (11)	32 (65)	142 (22)	625 (100)

X^2 (18, N = 625) 111.040, p = 0.0001.
Eta-square = 0.175 (audiovisual category); 0.270 (social network).
N (%).

3 and 2), whereas it is clear that the emerging parties have a strong emotional presence (Likert scale 1 and 2 for the format) as well as a significant medium value (Likert scale 3 and 2).

Analysing the different candidates, it is revealed that there is a block of traditional parties that mainly share 'non-emotional' content. In Table 5 we can see that Pedro Sánchez, as the incumbent prime minister of the government, was the candidate who least used the formats with a high emotional level, together with Pablo Casado, the leader of the main opposition party. The candidates from emerging parties are found in general to tend to use more emotional formats, especially the leader of the party Unidas Podemos, Pablo Iglesias and the leader of the extreme right-wing party, Vox, Santiago Abascal. Albert Rivera's emergent liberal party, Ciudadanos, was seen to have similar levels of emotiveness in its formats.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The first conclusion that can be drawn from the analysis is the conservative nature of the different parties in choosing the different categories of video, in keeping with other previous studies in the case of Spain (Selva-Ruiz and Caro-Castaño 2017). All of the candidates, regardless of their political leaning, used soundbites above all, whether from meetings or interviews. It is the format that we consider least emotional, because they are statements that politicians make to the media, often responding to questions related to the public agenda. On the other hand, specific advertisements for social media platforms were deeply used by all candidates. Nevertheless, in the answers to RQ_1, we do find differences in the use of video formats but not the difference posed in the study between 'traditional/emerging' and 'left/right wing'. What is clearly perceived is that the 'YouTuber-style selfie', the format that we have defined as 'more emotional' for enhancing the privacy and private life of the candidates, was widely disseminated by Pablo Iglesias, the candidate for Unidos Podemos, who used it daily to share his particular summary of the campaign with his followers. These data are similar to those obtained elsewhere, where a greater difference in the videos used is seen depending more on the candidates' geographical location than on matters related to the ideological spectrum (Kusche 2017).

We can also see that Twitter is without a doubt the candidates' preferred social medium as seen, for example, in US politics recently (Buccoliero et al. 2020), whereas Instagram is the least used despite its popularity among young people and, therefore, its great potential, as seen with politicians in other countries who use this social medium more intensively (Ekman and Widholm 2017; Lalancette and Raynould 2017). As for the question RQ_2, the candidate's image clearly has a majority presence in the SNS in three out of four posts as a whole. However, there are many differences among them: Pablo Casado, the candidate for PP, appears in the shot 23 per cent of times compared to 2.9 per cent of posts in which he does not. Sánchez, Rivera and Iglesias also appear to a very large extent, though not as much. On the other hand, Abascal only appears in approximately half of the videos he shares.

With regard to H_1, we consider it to have been met, since the 'traditional' parties massively share more formats considered to be 'institutional' and 'non-emotional', whereas the 'emerging' parties' proportion of 'emotional' ones is higher, practically reaching parity with the 'non-emotional' ones. Analysing the specific data for the candidates considered to be 'emerging' ones, Iglesias

Table 4: Crosstab. Candidate/presence (by the authors).

	Yes	**No**	**Total**
Pablo Casado	144 (23)	18 (2.9)	162 (25.9)
Pablo Iglesias	115 (18.4)	31 (5)	146 (23.4)
Pedro Sánchez	125 (20)	14 (2.2)	139 (22.2)
Santiago Abascal	42 (6.7)	53 (8.5)	95 (15.2)
Albert Rivera	62 (9.9)	21 (3.3)	83 (13.3)
Total	488 (78.1)	137 (21.9)	625 (100)

X^2 (4, N = 625) 86.728, p = 0.0001.
Eta-square = 0.337 (candidate); 0.373 (presence of candidate).
N (%).

Table 5: Crosstab. Category/candidate.

	Pedro Sánchez	**Pablo Casado**	**Pablo Iglesias**	**Albert Rivera**	**Santiago Abascal**
(5) YouTuber-style selfie looking at the camera	0	2 (7.1)	23 (82.1)	3 (10.7)	0
(5) Ambient and unedited resources	1 (1)	18 (18.2)	3 (3)	20 (20.2)	57 (57.6)
(4) Rectangular TV broadcast ad without subtitles <40 seconds	0	1 (25)	0	3 (75)	0
(4) Other uncommon audiovisual proposals	0	0	8 (80)	0	2 (20)
(3) Live broadcast of meetings or events	24 (40)	15 (25)	15 (25)	6 (10)	0
(3) Specific ad for social networks	28 (26.7)	39 (37.1)	18 (17.1)	11 (10.5)	9 (8.6)
(2) Soundbite from a meeting	62 (33.9)	51 (27.9)	38 (20.8)	20 (10.9)	12 (6.6)
(2) Soundbite from an interview or debate in the media	24 (18.8)	31 (24.2)	40 (31.3)	19 (14.8)	14 (10.9)
(1) Usual news item or video on television	0	0	1 (50)	0	1 (50)
(1) Spontaneous press scrum recorded with an autonomous camera	0	5 (83.3)	0	1 (16.7)	0

Note: Order of categories from most to least emotionality (5–1). Data in row, N (%).
X^2 (36, N = 625) 322.284, p = 0.000.
Eta = 0.318 (category); 0.506 (candidate).
N (%).

and Abascal, the latter has the clearest trend, with over half of his content in categories considered 'emotional'. These results are different from what we can see these days in other places around the world such as Italy, where the emotional and, to some extent, populist discourse is being used increasingly by all parties' candidates, whether traditional or new (Mazzoleni and Bracciale 2018). In this regard, the politicians in Spain's more 'traditional' parties are a little more reluctant to use video formats with more emotional connotations.

To sum up, the main contributions of this research are, first of all, that there is a general lack of concern from the candidates and their consultants about carrying out a suitable strategy to promote themselves via audiovisual resources in the social media platforms: the comparative study of the three SNS reveals that both Facebook and Instagram are clearly underused, which constitutes a missed opportunity for leaders and their parties to more effectively approach new audiences that move more fluently in digital environments. Furthermore, and secondly, it is perceived that within the audiovisual resources, the parties and candidates generally follow the classic patterns in choosing categories, restricting Spanish readers' ability to take part actively in politics and generate *engagement* dynamics. Even the parties considered to be 'emerging' ones make this choice. Even so, an attempt can be seen by the candidate for Unidos Podemos to use a resource more embedded in the so-called participatory culture with a YouTuber-style video. In addition, this practice bolsters the use of the candidate's image, which is also especially high in the other profiles analysed except for the leader of Vox, Santiago Abascal, who, unlike the way he uses his own Instagram profile (Sampietro and Sánchez-Castillo 2020), surprisingly hardly uses his own image but massively uses other emotional resources, which is coherent with the strategy of a party showing citizens that it is a political movement with increasingly more followers. We should find such growth alarming when considering the quality of democracy in Spain, in keeping with such concerns about what is happening around the world. In any case, the results that we present should be contrasted in future electoral processes to determine if, indeed, there is a correlation between the use of emotional strategy in audiovisual communication by political parties, especially with regard to video, and electoral growth.

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